Perception, Urban Memory, Place Identity: The Case of Yassıada

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Abstract--The built environment has an important place in the past and future in our minds. The peripheries we perceive are gaining their identity with architectural products and the place we have in our memory and what it means. The memories live in the spaces and allow the places to be memorized and remembered with associations over time. Yassıada; it differs from this situation in that it takes place in memories with a social event. Yassıada is evaluated in the context of a symbolic perception as well as social habits in this study. Spaces occupy separate spaces in memory due to their reflection on life, but Yassıada; since there is no place in everyday life and usage is closed, the formation of Yassıada identity in this study is made up of memory, place identity and built environment data, the position of Yassıada's urban memory trace; perception - spatial memory - ground identity relationship, were searched. The case study was followed as a method in the study. By using the survey technique in the field study, the case study was carried out for different user profile. As a result of the study, the relationship between perception, place identity and spatial memory has been tried to be revealed by questionnaire studies conducted in Yassıada sample.

Index Term--Space Memory, Perception, Place Identity, Built Environment, Yassıada.

INTRODUCTION
The elements that constitute the urban identity can be analysed in terms of natural, human and elements caused due to built environment (Önem, A.B., Kılınçaslan, İ., 2005). The natural environment is comprised of topographical condition, climate conditions, water component, vegetation, geological condition and general location. The differences in such factors distinguish, define, individuate cities, and establish urban identity. Individual and society are the identity elements arising from the human environment. Identity elements include built environment elements, action spaces caused by the on-going human needs in the cities and built objects that are shaped through the mutual relations of such action spaces (Ocaç, M. 1994).
Pursuant to Ocaç, M. (1994); the following items are the factors in considering the built environment elements as identity elements within the urban pattern:
1- View,
2- Location and
3- Meaning factor.

The subjective visual impact of object developed in terms of dimensions as form, structure, ratio, pattern, symbolic status and used materials, constitutes the visual factor. The location factor is the impact of unique place and location regarding its relations with natural environment elements, urban action spaces and other built environment elements. The meaning factor is the functional importance or its impact caused by its unique and symbolic value acquired during the historic development process of city (Ocaç, 1994).

This study discusses Yassıada from the perspective of its meaning factor and meaning dimension in the context of impact that it creates through its symbolic value in the city. The study would firstly explain the relevant basic concepts; address the relation of architecture and identity and interpret the data generated from the field study under the conclusion and evaluation sections.

BASIC CONCEPTS
According to Erdönmez, E., (2005); cities are the spaces,
- Where societies and individuals exist together and socialize,
- That are comprised of different social and cultural classes and ethnic groups,
- With people that have different characteristics come together
as a meeting space for the alienated segments of society.
Taşçı, H. (2014) defines city from the social perspective as the relations created based on the organisational types of societies or relations between the conquered former communities and experiences, and the settlements where societies can not live the systems that they are a part of in terms of economic, social and political aspect.
Cities are referred to various definitions and classification based on the geographical conditions of their region: such as coastal city, port city, Mediterranean city (Taşçı, H., 2014).
Taşçı, H. (2014) notes the relation of civilisation-geography-history described by Cerasi with a graph example: the horizontal axis of geography is generated by the vertical axis of history and urban spirit/culture is created on the intersection point of both.
There is a symbolic value between human and environment. The symbolic environment that is shaped by the cultural
heritage creates this situation between itself and its reality (Morval 1985, cit. Göregenli, M. 2015). Tversky (2003) indicated that there must be mental representation of space in order to allow an effective performance for an individual within the space. We perceive the objects through such representations based on the spatial relations developed between objects in line with certain (cit. Göregenli, M. 2015). Image is created as the cultural and psychological elements that affect perception shapes image (Figure 1). According to the dictionary of Turkish Language Association (TDK), perception is defined as comprehension; comprehending something by paying attention to it.

Fig. 1. Image Formation (Baily, S. A., 1977; cit. Göregenli, M. 2015 ).
Pursuant to Göregenli, M. (2015), Downs and Stea differentiated the perception and cognitive dimension while defining perception as a process launched by an object and directly comprehended with one or more senses. Baily (1977) indicated that the represented space would become the perceived space accordingly (cit. Göregenli, M. 2015). Downs and Stea (1973) emphasized that perception is related with a process that was launched by an object and completed with the comprehension of object with one or more senses (Göregenli, M., 2015). Human associates a symbolic value to environment and constitutes a symbolic environment shaped by cultural heritage between itself and reality (Göregenli, M., 2015). An image can be process primarily by the identification of an object; hence, the object should be accepted as an entity by dissociating from other things, which would exhibit its identity (Lynch, K., 2017).

While Kale, G., (2004) defines our memory as the combination of experiences and our imagination; as a result of such imagination, the images from our era and far from this era are envisioned in our minds. Such envision is described as allowing such meeting in our era with the introduction of our interpretation to the past and images from the past. The past that is built in our mind, and existing situation is remembered in an interaction and within the framework of cultural structure (Kale, G., 2004). In terms of urban scale, the building environments ensure such recall. The relation between the perceived environment and identity is ensured with the architectural products and social events. The architectural products are shaped in accordance with the cultural structure of city; and they create the urban identity in time by imprinting on minds together with memories. Pursuant to Lows and Altman (1992); the cultural dimension of space attachment and place identity is formed in six dimensions:

1- Historic dimension,
2- Connections formed by the losses or voluntary separations in the relationship between location and space,
3- Economic connection through property,
4- Cosmological environment related with spiritual and mythological relations,
5- Connections formed by religion, secular environment and inclusion to cultural events,
6- Narrative based environment that arises with regard to story, legends and place names (cit. Göregenli, M., 2015).

One of the significant components in the formation of place identity is the narrative. Yassıada, as the subject matter of this study, have a place in the minds due to the narration of a historic event in addition to being a significant space in terms of historic and social aspect. Although Yassıada is not within the city as a result of its surrounding; hence, it is not a space for continuous interaction, it has a specific social importance due to the experiences having a place in minds through narration. Such significance can be explained with the place identity. Proshanky (1978) defined the place identity as a complicated pattern that combines the natural and built environment of individual with the identity of setting and individual identified within the feelings, values, beliefs and expectations (Cit. Göregenli, M., 2015).

Place attachment hence bears an importance in the formation of place identity. According to Riley (1992), place attachment is the emotional relationship between man and landscape through cognition, preference and judgment of individual (Cit. Göregenli, M., 2015). Place attachment revives the sense of belonging. The concept of belonging is also a part of the Maslow’s hierarchy of needs as well as being an effective component in the formation of place identity. The concept of spatial perception identifies the knowledge levels of people with regard to the physical features of that space, and has a vital role in the evaluation of space to be conducted by people. Evaluations have impact on the personal behaviours and shape them respectively. The concept of spatial perception is related with remembering the space in accordance with the short or long term personal experiences in that space or surroundings (Özen, 2006).

IDENTITY AND PLACE IDENTITY

The scope of identity is comprised of cultural components as well as the elements symbolising the life style such as multi-dimensional belief, attitude, value judgment, which are the equivalent of social position and status in the personal environments (Karaduman, S. 2010).

Bell, F. and Loomis 1978; Lalli 1992 emphasized that urban identity has occurred as a result of complicated experiences throughout the relationships of individual self, identities and place identities within the urban space, and defined the city as the complete symbols arising from the individual experience richness (cit. Göregenli, M. 2015). Lalli (1992) noted that the first phase that forms the urban identity is related with the unique values of an individual or groups on their perception of own cities; while explaining the second phase with the continuity: symbolisation of urban experiences and past dimension with the biography of city. Such situation develops with the formation of attachment feeling and engages the relationship with the city (cit. Göregenli, M. 2015).

According to Lynch, K. (2017); an environmental image might be divided into three components:

1- Identity,
2- Structure and
3- Meaning. Lynch (2017) noted that such three elements are together.

A workable image firstly requires the identification of objects and transformation to an entity through decomposition, which reflects its identity.

Through the Manhattan example, Lynch (2017) mentions the silhouette of Manhattan that connotes the vitality, power, mystery, collapse, magnificence and crown. Although it is very easy to express the form of city, each city has various meanings for each individual.

Historic built environments, as a reference to the past of cities, allow the comprehension and interpretation of cities while allowing the users to adapt themselves to the city (Sağsöz, A. and Al, S., 2013).

In order to define the connections of individuals with the places and themselves, there are different concepts such as place attachment, place identity, sense of place and place dependence in the literature (Kutay Karaçoğr, 2012).

Place identity is not the realization through direct experience of a place but a psychological investment that develops in time. Due to the place dependence, the continuous use of place might also transform into place identity. This emotional situation reflects the symbolic importance of place and gives meaning to the life upon transforming into the sense of belonging; consequently it enhances the sense of belonging to a certain group (Proshansky et.al, 1983; Vaske and Kobrin, 2001; Relph, 1976 cit. Karaçoğr, E. K. and Akaçam E. 2016).

While the attachment to places has a crucial role in the development of identity in addition to improving the sense of society (Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001). Additionally, physical, social and personal elements have also significant role in the development of the sense of society (Smith, 2011, cit. Karaçoğr, E. K. and Akaçam E. 2016.).

The attachment towards Yassıada can only be explained with the place identity. In time, a psychological and social bond is established with the place through the symbols identified with the island, and this bond has become effective in the acquisition of ‘place identity’. Within the scope of study, a questionnaire activity was conducted with regard to the field, and the bond of participants established with Yassıada and the associated perception and its place in minds were analysed. The next section will cover the field study and the findings generated from such field study would be interpreted under the conclusion and evaluation section.

FIELD STUDY

The questionnaire was performed towards different user groups within the Yassıada of İstanbul province sample with questionnaire technique. As a result of this activity, the
connection between perception, place identity and spatial memory was aimed to be reflected through the questionnaire conducted within the framework of Yassıada example.

**Findings**

Among the participants of questionnaire, 49.3% have undergraduate and 43.3% post-graduate degrees; 23.9% is between the ages of 21-30, 46.3% of 31-40, 23.9% of 41-50.

**Fig. 3.** Table of education level status.

**Fig. 4.** Table of age.

50% of questionnaire participants are architects.
The answers for the question regarding the province which Yassıada is a part of are 55.7% as Yalova, 26.2% as Balıkesir; such figures indicate that the participants do not know the province that Yassıada is a part of.

43.3% of participants consider Yassıada as important.
The most popular answer to the question as where your knowledge on Yassıada comes from is ‘from documentaries and movies’ with 47.8%. 29.9% of participants replied to this question with ‘from my researches’.

The most popular answer to the question for the meaning of Yassıada is 65.7% as a political place.
7. Yassıada sizin için ne anlama ifade etmektedir?

67 yanıt

Fig. 9. Meaning of Yassıada.

The participants replied the question about what Yassıada is associated to as 79.1% with Adnan Menderes and his friends.

8. Yassıada'yı aşağıdakilerden hangisini anımsatmaktadır?

67 yanıt

Fig. 10. Recalling Yassıada.

While 43.3% of participants do not know the new name of Yassıada, yet 90.8% participants answered the question about the new name of Yassıada as correct.
9. Yassıada’nın yeni adını biliyor musunuz?
67 yanıt

Fig. 11. New name of Yassıada.

10. Yassıada’nın yeni adı nedir?
65 yanıt

Fig. 12. New name of Yassıada.

There have been different answers for the existing function of Yassıada as 35.9% of answers were as museum, 28.1% as none, 20.3% as prison and court.
As the most popular answer about the introduction of a new function for Yassıada, 47.8% of participants replied as social and cultural space; while 23.9% as tourism space and 16.4% as green space.

CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION
Built environment has a vital place in our past and present mind-set. Our perceived environments obtain identity with the location and meaning in our memories through the architectural products. Memories are experienced in the places and make such places to be imprinted on the memories and remembered in time via connotations. Yassıada differs from this situation due to be imprinted on the memories through a social event. In the formation of environmental image, the structures that form the built environment and the structure that is shaped with the cultural influences introduce an identity to its surrounding. Such impact makes sense to us with the environment, which we perceive as a whole, and the surrounding buildings and what they mean to us. Yassıada is imprinted on the mind due to a political events and it has come until today through a number of narrations (documentary,
series, movies etc.). A place is imprinted on our memories via an event or personal perception, and is remembered through recalling from our memories; hence memory allows remembering the past via recall. A series, movie, book, event or a person might allow such recall and bring it to the surface. Today, such recall can be explained with the search rates on the Internet. In consideration with the search rates, Yassıada was recalled and attracted interest through a series or movie broadcasted that time.

As Figure 15 indicates, Yassıada was searched the most between the years of 2008-2010. The series broadcasted at that time had an impact accordingly. The reason of increase in 2012 was due to the discussions about changing the name of island; and in 2017 regarding the impact of renovation works on the island. While the province of Yassıada is not known, the participants mainly know the new name of Yassıada. The different answers given regarding the existing use of Yassıada reflects the existence of information about the island, which is currently out-of-use, obtained from the different sources. The new function of island would mainly be a social and cultural space; Yassıada recalls Adnan Menderes and his friends; and the island was imprinted on the memories as a political place. Perceived as a political place, the island is remembered through Adnan Menderes and his friends, and found its identity as a result of political event. Yassıada is symbolised with a social event.

ANNEX 1: Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims to contribute the study called “Perception, Urban Memory, Place Identity: The Case of Yassıada”.

QUESTIONS

1. What is your education level?
   - Illiterate
   - Literate
   - Primary School
   - Secondary School
   - High School
   - Undergraduate
   - Postgraduate

2. How old are you?
   - 15-20
   - 21-30
   - 31-40
   - 41-50
   - 51-60
   - 61-70
   - 71 and above

3. What is your occupation?
   - Architect
   - Interior Architect
   - Landscape Architect
   - Town Planner
   - Other (please specify)………………………………….

4. What is the province of Yassıada?
   - İstanbul
   - Bursa
   - Balıkesir
   - Yalova

5. What is the personal significance level of Yassıada?
   - Very important
   - Important
   - Not so important
   - Not important
   - Very non-important

6. How do you know about Yassıada?
   - Family
   - School
   - My research
   - Civil society organisations
   - Documentaries, movies and series

7. What is the personal meaning of Yassıada?
   - Cultural place
   - Political place
   - Historic place
   - Place with architectural importance

8. Which one does make Yassıada recall?
   - Adnan Menderes and His friends
   - İstanbul
   - Its Nature
   - Its Architecture

9. Do you know the new name of Yassıada?
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